

Sustaining Souls

by

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Abstract

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The Army's operational tempo and demand on the force over the past 10 years have significantly increased the religious and pastoral needs of the force. The Chaplain Corps needs to begin focused efforts in doctrine, training, and leader development to strengthen chaplain identity that will support sustainment of Soldier's and Families souls. This paper examines identity models and appropriate formation principles. Utilization of formation across the domains of chaplain branch training will strengthen and instill a robust chaplain identity. A more robust chaplain identity will ensure consistent and comprehensive care for the religious and spiritual needs of Soldiers and Families. Attending to these needs with greater vitality and effectiveness will contribute to stronger souls and ultimately strengthen the Army's Soldiers and Families. According to the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Ray Odierno, these Soldiers and Families are the strength of our Army and our Nation.

Sustaining Souls

The U.S. Army is arguably the strongest army in the world today. The current Army Chief of Staff, General Ray Odierno, defines the strength of this force with these words: "The strength of the Nation is our Army, The strength of the Army is our Soldiers, The strength of its Soldiers is its Families - This is what makes us 'Army Strong.'"¹ How do we sustain this strength located within Soldiers and Families?

General George C. Marshall, one of our Nation's extraordinary military leaders, highlighted the salience of this question of strength: "The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end."² General Marshall's answer, that the underlying strength of Soldiers is their spirit or soul, presents a strategic concern for the Army. This is an ancient concern that exceeds our Army history or even national history. Ancient Hebrew Scriptures expressed the need to sustain the soul of Soldiers: "When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and say to the soldiers: 'Hear, O Israel! Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Be not weakhearted or afraid; be neither alarmed nor frightened by them. For it is the Lord, your God, who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies and give you victory.'"³ These prophetic words reflect General Marshall's concern for Soldiers' spirits and souls as a moral imperative: Soldiers must possess spiritual strength in the face of those inhumane conditions known as war, to succeed on the battlefield. General George S. Patton Jr. expressed similar thoughts during a lecture in 1933: "Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and of the man who leads that gains victory."⁴

The criticality of the strength of the Soldier's spirit or soul is inextricably bound with the Army's current strategic imperatives as well as operational objectives and tactical plans of commanders. For example, the inner strength of the Soldier bears directly on the strategic imperatives of the Army: sustain, prepare, reset, and transform the force.⁵ Poor spiritual fitness or unsupported souls can hinder sustainment, slow preparation, upset the reset process, and retard transformation efforts. Additionally, the distressed spirits and souls of leaders can negatively affect the commander's operational concerns for mission command, core values, proper stewardship of resources, and management of risk. This potential degradation of souls and spirits can also impact the commander's ability to execute tactical missions. Specifically, poor spiritual fitness can reduce Soldier motivation to overcome challenges and accomplish the mission. This spiritual lacking can also lead to lost training time because of excessive requirements for individual and Family counseling. Such negative effects across strategic, operational, and tactical levels are a concern for all Army leaders. Without the instilled strength of spiritually strong Soldiers and Families, our Nation's military power is in jeopardy and subsequently our national global power is tenuous. In fact, the spiritual welfare, or sustained souls, of Soldiers and Families should be a fundamental consideration for assessing the effectiveness and readiness of our force.

This paper highlights the issue sustaining the soul of the Soldier for battle. Part one focuses on current behavioral trends that shed light on the significant spiritual health of Soldiers and Families. Part two examines the roles and responsibilities for those charged with sustaining the soul of Soldiers and Families, with special attention to the historical tradition and regulatory guidelines of Army chaplains. Part three presents

the findings of a survey of commanders on what makes a chaplain effective, strongly suggesting that the personal identity of the chaplain is key to success in strengthening souls. Part four offers an overview of aspects of chaplain identity. Part five examines the nature of identity development through formation processes. Finally, part six provides concrete recommendations on how to strengthen the chaplain identity through formation processes focused on doctrine, training, and leader development, to support sustainment of Soldier's and Families' souls.

Current State of Souls in the Army

Today's military service environment is one of growing stress in many areas. The Army's operational tempo and demand on the force over the past 10 years have increased the spiritual and pastoral demands. A recent *Joint Force Quarterly* issue dedicated to "Force Resiliency" provides a useful summary of the current situation facing the force: "A 10-year war on terror has stressed our forces and families to the point where members are bending and swaying under the pressures of multiple deployments and separation from family and friends."⁶ These acute stressors are manifesting a variety of unhealthy behaviors.

Many of these unhealthy manifestations of overwhelming stressors are hidden and difficult to measure. Familial and relationship issues are rampant but not easily measurable. Two of the most dangerous and clearly defined destructive behaviors found in the Army ranks today are suicides and substance abuse. Both of these destructive behaviors have grown significantly over the last decade. The recent Army Suicide Prevention Program Data Analysis indicates a significant increase from 11.5 per 100,000 in 2003 to a rate of 23.1 in 2011 and a rate of 32.5 per 100,000 in 2012.⁷ This tremendous growth in suicides is difficult to explain in its entirety; however, one

important point of comparison is that the Army suicide rate far exceeds the known national rate of suicide among the civilian population.⁸ Given these data points and the correlation with the Army's challenging past 10 years of deployments, it is clear that Soldier's and Families are dealing with a higher degree of stress than previous periods. Certainly, not all stress leads to such an extreme response as suicide or even suicidal ideation. That said, this trend is indicative of relatively high levels of unhealthy stress on the force.

Another extremely dangerous behavior indicative of high stress levels among Soldiers and Families is substance abuse. The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies recently cited the significant growth of alcohol abuse by Active Duty Service Members. This source indicated a 12 percent rise, 20 percent total, in binge drinking between 1998 and 2008. Additionally, the heavy drinking rates for the same period increased by five percent, 47 percent total.⁹ This national institute indicated this abusive alcohol use is high and categorized it as "unacceptably high" and "constitutes a public health crisis."¹⁰ Additionally, this source indicated a quadruple number, since 2001, of "skyrocketing prescription painkiller use."¹¹ Such high drug abuse, together with heavy alcohol drinking rates for almost half of all active duty military members, make it clear that Soldiers and Families are dealing with difficult issues, and high levels of distress. The potential harm to our force is alarming. This trend of distress will debilitate our force unless appropriate care is applied.

One author presented a critical correlation of the current high number of stressors that Soldiers and Families endure to the need for spiritual care. Here, I draw on Dr. Harold G. Koenig's work at the Duke University's Center for Spirituality,

Theology, and Health. Dr. Koenig's research indicates, "that those who are involved in religious practice are less likely to become overwhelmed, develop depression or anxiety or commit suicide."¹² Furthermore, Dr. Koenig cites many studies that indicate a strong impact of spiritual practice on a wide range of health disorders that include alcohol abuse and suicide:

Of the 444 studies conducted worldwide on the effects of religious involvement on depression, 61 percent found that people who are more religious suffer less depression and recover faster...Of the 278 studies on alcohol abuse, 240 report less use, abuse and dependence among those scoring higher on religious involvement. And of the 185 studies conducted on drug abuse, 84 percent reported less drug abuse among those who are more religiously involved. Finally, on suicide, 75 percent of the 141 studies found less suicide and more negative attitude toward suicide among those scoring higher on religious involvement.¹³

These studies point to the need for spiritual care for a wide range of stressors that afflict today's Soldiers and Families. Recognizing the value of these studies along with the high stressors facing our Army force, the demand for chaplain expertise is strong. This evidence indicates that demand for spiritual care also covers a myriad of human needs. Former Army Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (MG) Douglas Carver, stated succinctly the need for chaplain support: "We help people see there is a future," calling military chaplains "agents of hope . . . to sustain Soldiers and their Families for the long haul."¹⁴

Chaplain Responsibilities for Sustaining Souls

The origin of the word chaplain provides the essence of an Army chaplain's responsibility for the care of Soldier's souls. The term chaplain originated in the Fourth century from Saint Martin of Tours. During his time as a Soldier, Saint Martin felt compelled to care for a shivering man outside his Army encampment. Saint Martin sacrificed his own well-being by splitting his only cloak in half to cover the needy man.¹⁵ Subsequently, Saint Martin had a vision that the poor man was Christ. The cloak

became a relic carried by Soldiers into battle, representing Saint Martin's selfless care for the needy and his spiritual care for Soldiers. A reliquary known in French as *cappella* protected and transported the *cappa* of Saint Martin. The term *chappelle* translates into the English word chapel. The *chappelle* was the responsibility of a priest who became known as *chappellanus*. This is the French word that translates into our English word chaplain.¹⁶ Consequently, the title chaplain itself carries an intrinsic mandate for selfless service that facilitates the spiritual needs of Soldiers' souls.

Our nation has always recognized this requirement to provide spiritual care for her Soldiers. Beginning with the Continental Congress, our Army called chaplains into service to meet the spiritual requirements of Soldiers. Army Regulation (AR) 165-1, Army Chaplain Corps Activities, highlights our Army's "core commitment to the soul and spirit of the Army to: Nurture the Living, Care of the Wounded and Honor the Dead."¹⁷ These commitments were present from the beginning of our nation and expressed by our first great military leader. General George Washington recognized the spiritual need of his troops as an essential element for success in battle. Washington's request for chaplain support was the impetus for the Continental Congress's legislation establishing the first federal chaplain corps.¹⁸

Later, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteed the free exercise of religion for all citizens including Soldiers, Family Members, and authorized Department of Defense Civilians. Ensuring the free exercise of religion in the context of honoring the First Amendment non-establishment of religion by any governmental authority, chaplains work together to provide opportunities for worship services, religious classes, and other spiritual needs for service members of all faiths. Although

U.S. Code designates commanders as the responsible agents for ensuring religious accommodation, AR 165-1 requires chaplains to assist the commander by providing for these religious needs.¹⁹ Additionally, AR 165-1 states that chaplains should not violate their own faith traditions and ecclesiastical endorsements.²⁰ Finally, Title 10, United States Code, Section 3073, Section 3547, and Section 3581, along with AR 165-1, prescribe the chaplain position, duties, and responsibilities.²¹ These duties and responsibilities include worship, religious counseling, pastoral care, religious education, and other faith group ministrations. These religious support ministrations are most clearly expressed in the three major principles: Nurture the Living, Care for the Wounded, and Honor the Dead.²² The design of these statutory and regulatory requirements ensures that chaplains meet the spiritual needs of Soldiers and Families. Most importantly, underlying these comprehensive spiritual requirements is the need for sustaining souls and spirits. Other official sources such as Field Manual (FM) 1-05, Religious Support, refine these responsibilities.

FM 1-05 is the “Army’s keystone manual for detailing fundamental principles of comprehensive religious support.”²³ This manual describes the chaplain’s role as the religious leader who supports resiliency efforts: “The chaplain performs or provides religious support that meets the religious and spiritual requirements of the unique military culture.”²⁴ Supporting this emphasis for meeting the spiritual needs of Soldiers, the manual cites the exemplary selfless service of six chaplains awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism.²⁵ This level of selfless service may not be achieved by many but epitomizes the level of care all chaplains are responsible to provide. This document

clearly links the chaplain role and responsibilities with a requirement for the chaplain's selfless care of Soldiers. These efforts sustain Soldiers in combat.

AR 600-63, Army Health Promotion describes additional requirements for spiritual care of Soldiers and Families. This document recognizes the responsibilities of the Chief of Chaplains to "promote concepts of spiritual well-being and good health among Soldiers and Family members."²⁶ This regulation provides directives for the care of all the dimensions within the human being. Here, the "total person" includes a need for spiritual fitness.²⁷ This spiritual fitness includes reflection and other "qualities needed to sustain a person in times of stress, hardship, and tragedy."²⁸ Additionally, the regulation includes spiritual fitness for inner integrity of a person's values, relationships, and inner peace.²⁹ Furthermore, this regulation specifies the need for community elements, such as the practice of religion and the freedom to worship.³⁰ AR 600-63 clearly describes elements of spiritual fitness. This type of fitness builds and sustains the inner element or souls of Soldiers and Families.

The role of chaplains in sustaining the souls of Soldiers and Families is well established. The highest levels of the Army continue to emphasize the salience of sustaining souls. The Secretary of the Army and the United States Army Chief of Staff recently reinforced this need in the Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2013. Here, two of the four stated strategic planning imperatives contain implied guidance regarding chaplains and the need to sustain the souls of Soldiers and Families. One of the strategic planning imperatives of the Army Campaign Plan is "enhance the all-volunteer Army."³¹ This is a continuous objective that requires improvement in the efficacy of programs and support for Soldiers' and Families' safety, health, readiness, and

resiliency. Although not explicitly stated, this guidance implies the need for spiritual care. The guidance calls for the care of Soldiers and Families that builds resiliency throughout the Soldier's active service.³² The spiritual health of Soldiers and Families is a component of their well-being. Chaplains are responsible for providing this well-being.

The Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2012 provides additional implied guidance for the Chaplain Corps. This document prescribes a near term imperative to "Develop leaders to meet the challenges of the 21st century."³³ This imperative requires the development of leaders capable of training Soldiers to be adaptive, professional, and disciplined for any mission. Moreover, this strategic imperative requires leaders from all components to employ their expertise in highly ambiguous, complex, and dangerous environments.³⁴ This level of expertise in the Chaplain Corps requires focus on those spiritual care capabilities that the Army expects from all chaplains. With this in mind, the strategic planning guidance requires continued emphasis on strengthening religious leaders and their ability to sustain the souls of Soldiers and Families. These imperatives are important and indicative of the current needs facing our Soldiers and Families. Commanders help assess how well chaplains are meeting these spiritual needs.

Commanders Assess Effectiveness and Provide Attributes

As part of this research paper, I conducted brief interviews with 12 battalion and brigade level Army commanders to investigate how well chaplains are meeting the spiritual demands of Soldiers and Families.³⁵ These commanders represented the breadth of Army units across the warfighting functions. These interviews indicated a great disparity between successful chaplains and those completely unsatisfactory chaplains. One commander rated previous unit chaplains as 1 or 10 out of scale of 1 to

10. In this case the commander identified character attributes of “dedication and selfless service (self-abnegation and altruism) to the Soldiers, civilians and Special Agents in my unit” as the key elements for successful chaplains.³⁶ This is in contrast to unsatisfactory chaplains exhibiting character attributes of: “careerism, laziness, lack of presence, lack of care/concern, or support.”³⁷ These assessments were representative of the entire group interviewed for this project. Chaplains were rated at one end of the scale or the other. As a group, commanders did not indicate any middle ground in rating their chaplains.

The disparity of chaplain effectiveness indicates a polarized chaplain field. Chaplains are either very successful in their commander’s assessment or very unsuccessful. Commanders indicate this disparity in two areas: character attributes and components of chaplain profession identity. According to the survey results, successful chaplains possess the character attributes depicted in Figure 1.

Attributes of Successful Chaplains

Team member, integrated, interpersonal skill, selflessness, desire to support Soldiers, flexibility, humor, candor, equal treatment, open to learning, aggressive in performing/providing, integrity, exemplifies Golden Rule, dedication and selfless service to Soldiers, genuine, compassionate, dedication, self-abnegation, altruism, work ethic, trust, genuine care for Soldiers and Families, professional spiritual leader, communication, counseling (gaining trust of Soldiers), courage and determination, selfless servant, always willing to help, knowledge of all religions and expert in own denomination, initiative, communication skills, calming presence, integrity as spiritual leader, candid advise for commander, personal discipline, work ethic, and Army competence.

Figure 1. Attributes of Successful Chaplains³⁸

These attributes are distinct and diverse but communicate an image of spiritual leaders who devote their expertise to Soldiers, Commanders, and Families in a selfless manner. The attributes repeatedly express, explicitly and implicitly, selfless service. This indicates that selfless service is at the core of the effectiveness attributed to the successful chaplains. These chaplains give themselves in service and indicate a clear understanding of their role as a servant for Soldiers and Families. Conversely, attributes, and traits of unsuccessful chaplains indicate a mirror opposite. Commanders describe these unsuccessful chaplains in the attributes in Figure 2.

Attributes of Unsuccessful Chaplains

Lack of experience, careerism, excessive focus on pleasing Div/Post chaplain, lack of fitness, lack understanding Army culture/procedure/planning, careerism, lack of presence, lack of care/concern, unwilling to sacrifice to care for needs of Soldiers/Families, lack of selflessness, lack of ministry experience to serve as spiritual leader for Soldiers, lack understanding of roles-pastor/staff planner/Cdr advisor/spiritual support to command/Soldiers, tentative to communicate with Soldiers, lacked integrity with Army values, Self-centered, vocally abusive with subordinates, disconnected with unit, lacked technical confidence, did not have a good heart, serving only his own group, lack understanding in role as officer, self serving.

Figure 2. Attributes of Unsuccessful Chaplains³⁹

These words show a chaplain focused on caring for their own needs. Here, commanders clearly identify chaplains who lack understanding in their role as chaplain. Both the unsuccessful chaplains as well as the successful chaplains, indicate a common discriminator—chaplain identity.

Furthermore, chaplain identity was part of the commander's assessment interview. Commanders identified the most important components for the professional identity of a successful Army chaplain. Interviewed commanders described these components in of chaplain professional identity in Figure 3.

Components of Chaplain Professional Identity

Selfless Service, Confidentiality, Servant to Soldiers and Nation, Professionalism, morale exemplar, duty, selfless service, honor, integrity, moral courage, inspires spiritual and mental development, personal courage to communicate issues to superiors and peers, selflessness and mission first, professional competence, moral courage to advise command on issues within command, physical and moral courage to be at right time and place to sustain spiritual well being of Soldiers, going to Soldiers and Families, serve Soldiers and Families, moral courage to confront danger/challenge, compassion for all, commitment to Soldiers, available to Soldiers/Families, live Army values, candor with commander, Servant to God via other people, Understand human condition, competent staff officer(candor/courage to advise commander), belief in God, living example of discipleship, selfless service to Soldiers/Families, Service to Army, strong pastoral foundation, accredited counselor, truly selfless service.

Figure 3. Components of Chaplain Professional Identity⁴⁰

Here, commanders make a clear distinction of a chaplain identity founded on selfless service. One commander expressed this very clearly in the following words: “In general, I put chaplains into one of two categories: 1) Those who wish to serve . . . and 2) Those who wish to be served. Unfortunately most of my negative experiences with chaplains are with those who are overly ‘careerist.’” He goes on to distinguish between “those more focused on self than his Soldiers or his unit.”⁴¹ Clearly, this disposition of

selfless service encompasses all aspects of a chaplain's charge: care of Soldiers and Families in all situations, providing difficult advise to command, courageous personal discipleship and embracing all aspects of Army values and duties. Consequently, this distinction of identity is an imperative for chaplain excellence in the Army environment. This issue of identity is important to understand.

Aspects of Chaplain Identity

The human identity is a vast and complicated field of study that goes beyond the scope of this paper; however, certain pivotal elements of identity must be addressed. As a religious leader, pastor, clergy person, and Army officer, the chaplain has many identities. Understanding how these identities interact with each other is critical. Two identity models, one religious, and one secular, will provide valuable insights into the need for a robust chaplain identity.

Thomas Merton is a well-known spiritual scholar whose expertise on identity is helpful for instilling chaplain identity. Merton indicates that a person's spirit "pivots on the question of ultimate human identity."⁴² This is an important distinction of the true self that could lead to a false self of egocentric desires. For Merton this distinction influences how a person operates in life.⁴³ This model indicates that true self or identity is the convergence of a person's various identities and relationships into one whole relationship with God.⁴⁴ This convergence of self-identity with God is the true self or true identity. Most importantly, Merton suggests that without this true identity one is prone to a false self, which leads to egocentric or selfish life. Conversely, this movement toward a true self/identity confirms and strengthens the proper relationship of a person's various roles/identities.⁴⁵ Merton's model is significant because it identifies

true identity through contemplative awareness and prayerful attentiveness.⁴⁶ This model provides critical insights for strengthening the chaplain's identity.

A variety of identities or roles guides chaplains within the Army environment. Primarily chaplains are spiritual leaders, distinctive faith ministers, and Army staff officers. Chaplains are also fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, and a myriad of other identities—all critical identity components.

A helpful secular source for considering relevant elements of chaplain identity is found in a study on identity in organizations. Here, the authors use a construct known as organization identification. This work provides an important correlation between the individual and the organization. Application of this theory provides the following benefit on strengthened identities: “generates a sense of individual conviction and a willingness to devote increased effort to the organization.”⁴⁷ This growth of conviction relates directly to identity. The authors' construct indicates that a stronger personal identity leads to a greater organization identity. This results in greater satisfaction and production. This study further strengthens this connection based on an individual's self perception: “identification has been referred to as ‘the perception of one-ness of belongingness to some human aggregate.’”⁴⁸ The belonging attribute is important because it translates into behavior. This behavioral element provides another important consideration for development of strong organizational identity. The authors' theory states: “identification can be regarded as a more or less stable quality that transcends specific situations.”⁴⁹ This benefit is especially important in an ambiguous environment. These are all relevant considerations for understanding the need for a chaplain identity.

The identity model above can assist in establishing a robust chaplain identity. Primarily, this organizational identity theory leads to increased organizational commitment through strengthened individual identity. This identity model links a strong identity with greater immersion in the organizational identity. This leads to greater commitment to the organization and helps build a selfless orientation. This corresponds with the selfless chaplain identity desired by commanders. The secondary benefit of this model is to strengthen service in an ambiguous environment. This is an area where religious support tasks and training cannot be precisely delivered. Spiritual care and sustaining souls is ambiguous at times and requires chaplains to trust their own pastoral instincts, their own understanding of self. According to this model, when identity is lacking, commitment is low and the appropriate pastoral response to the environment is poor. Conversely, a robust chaplain identity will provide sufficient guidance in any challenging environment.

One final consideration for a robust chaplain identity is the ecclesiastical endorsement. As previously mentioned, chaplains must remain faithful to the faith tenets and doctrines of their own faith. This fidelity applies equally to their identity. The ecclesiastical identity remains paramount. Consequently, any instilled chaplain identity must be understood in an ancillary role. This is the proper relationship of identities for all chaplains. Understanding how to instill identity is important for the purpose chaplain identity.

Instilling Identity through Formation

Identity development is a process. That process is known as formation. This process of formation is distinct from education, or conveying knowledge. This is not a

complicated process. In fact, formation is a process the Army utilizes for some of the most foundational elements of its mission.

One simple example of formation is a Soldier's weapon qualification. On the firing range formation occurs when a Soldier's muscles and mind act together with a weapon. This process begins with education, information about weapon systems, and procedures prior to the firing at the range. The experience of firing those weapons, with feedback, at the range completes a formation process. This formation process provides the Soldiers with essential skills in combat and builds their identity as a Soldier.

Another example of formation occurs during the training of officers at the United States Military Academy and Reserve Officers' Training Course. Cadets are sent into Army formations in apprentice type assignments. Later, supervised reflections on these critical experiences in the field instill and reinforce understanding of the Army Profession identity. This same formation process of professional identity is found in other organizations as well.

This distinctive process of formation is even more relevant in the realm of ministry. L. Gregory Jones emphasizes this point well: "Theological education ought to be about forming people for ministry, not simply conveying information. . . . Theological education must shape ministerial identity. Forming ministerial identity requires attention to the care and nurture of souls beyond the classroom as well as in it."⁵⁰ This process of forming identity in civilian faith communities is equally applicable to forming chaplain identities in the military environment. The particular faith tenants and values may vary, but the process of formation is critical. The formation process inculcates the individual person into the community. Here, service to the community needs becomes

paramount. This is a process which would benefit all chaplains as they give themselves to serve the particular needs of the military community.

Jones further describes the formation process as particularly necessary given current culture's orientation. The culture emphasizes individualistic spirituality. Here, the author draws on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's emphasis on transforming the individual toward a communal, selfless perspective. This formation process is exercised through an enduring cycle of communal reflections lead by seasoned clergy and service in the field.⁵¹ This is a process of intentional reflection that develops and reinforces the valued attributes of ministry in the defined community. This same process can instill chaplains with the selfless service identity.

Numerous sources affirm the critical need of a well-founded formation process for ministry. One source that affirms the paramount role of formation over education is the Catholic Church. In January 2013, the Catholic Church's *Ministorum Institutio* announced a restructuring move that emphasizes the critical formation process's distinctive role over education. To ensure the ongoing and comprehensive process of formation for its priests, the Holy Father transferred this competency from the Congregation for Catholic Education to the Congregation for the Clergy. This move ensures the centrality of a comprehensive formation process of priests in training and continuity during the priests' life in ministry.⁵² The significance is that education is a component of preparation for priests ministry but does not entirely satisfy the comprehensive nature of ministry. Additionally, the Holy Father cited the increasing issues priests face as further justification for reemphasis on the priestly formation process. This canonical change also cites the intrinsic need for continuous formation

after seminary training.⁵³ This move to realign the seminarian training under the Congregation for the Clergy places a greater responsibility on a proper formation framework for ensuring healthy, longstanding ministry.

The evidence is clear that effective, healthy ministry requires more than education and information. Formation is the essential model that instills a true identity for ministry. As Merton indicates, without some form of identity discernment exercised over time, the false self or egotistic tendencies will distort a person. These are particularly salient considerations given the multidimensional life of Army chaplains. The impact of well-formed chaplains will greatly enhance chaplain identity.

Recommendations for Identity and Formation

Considering the diverse and equally important roles in the life of a chaplain Merton's concern for avoidance of a false self or identity is an important consideration for instilling chaplain identity. Conversely, a spiritually healthy chaplain needs practice in discerning this convergence or harmonizing of roles into a true self or true identity. According to Merton's theory this ultimate identity is centered on one, God. This theory can bring strength and additional gifts into the life of an Army chaplain. In fact, this ultimate identity is a complete synthesis of the chaplain's prime purpose of representing the divine for those in need.

Merton's recommended practice of contemplative awareness could help establish a more consistent model of selfless servant identity for chaplains. The concepts of this model could be implemented. Implementation would require discernment exercises, dedicated prayer time, spiritual attentiveness, and continuous execution of a lifetime.

Adapting formation processes for the development of a chaplain identity across the training domains is essential and feasible. Formation opportunities can be applied to elements of training domains (Institutional, Operational, and Self-development) within Chaplain Corps purview. During institutional training courses such as Chaplain Officer Basic Leadership Course, Chaplain Captains Career Course, and Advanced Civil Schooling, the Chaplain Corps can incorporate appropriate formation practices. Additionally, operationally focused training could include formation reflection exercises with local Senior Army Chaplains. Formation actions could become a part of mandatory annual branch training for chaplain supervisory positions at the tactical level. In the self-development domain, formation could include compulsory personal retreats. Mentoring or spiritual direction are additional actions that contribute to the formation process.

Additionally, formation must be ongoing and comprehensive. Identity formation is dynamic and occurs over time. This could begin during initial recruiting and assessing of chaplain candidates. Assessments could focus on uncovering the experience and potential aptitude candidates exhibit for formation process and incorporation of an Army chaplain identity. During the accessioning process, candidates would need to interview with a Senior Army Chaplain. This interview process could gauge the candidate's understanding of their identity and aptitude for a chaplain identity.

Additionally, development of chaplain identity measures would be useful in assessing a chaplain's identity. Promotion and assignment boards could apply these chaplain identity measures to establish a robust chaplain identity across the Chaplain

Corps. These formation adaptations, and others, would go a long way toward creating and reinforcing chaplain identity throughout the chaplain life cycle.

These recommendations are not exhaustive. Certainly additional measures need to be uncovered and studied, to help instill and strengthen chaplain identity at the strategic, operational, and tactical level to ensure the Chaplain Corps meets the growing spiritual demands of Soldiers and Families. Meeting these demands will benefit the force and will enhance commands at all levels of the Army.

The Chaplain Corps needs to begin focused efforts in doctrine, training, and leader development to strengthen chaplain identity that will support sustainment of Soldier's and Families souls. The focused efforts in identity formation throughout chaplain branch training will strengthen and instill a robust chaplain identity. A more robust chaplain identity will ensure consistent and comprehensive care for the spiritual needs of Soldiers and Families. Attending to these needs with greater vitality and effectiveness will contribute to stronger souls and ultimately strengthen the Army's Soldiers and Families. According to the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Ray Odierno, these Soldiers and Families are the strength of our Army and our Nation. Army Strong.

Endnotes

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¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Sarah Fawcett Thomas, ed., *Butler's Lives of the Saints: New Full Edition*, Full New Edition., ed. Paul Burns (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 83-87.

¹⁶ Tami Kilmarx, "The 235th Anniversary of the Army Chaplain Corps," *Examiner*, June 6, 2010, 1, www.examiner.com/article/the-235th-anniversary-of-the-army-chaplain-corps.

¹⁷ U.S Department of the Army, *Religious Support - Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, Army Regulation 165-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 3 December 2009), 1.

¹⁸ Edwin Davis, "The Religion of George Washington," *Air University Review* (jul-Aug 1976): 1, <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1976/jul-aug/edavis.html> (accessed December 20, 2012).

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²⁰ Ibid., 1. Ecclesiastical endorsement is the statutory requirement that legitimizes each chaplain's ecclesiastical credentials. Endorsing Agents are federally recognized representatives for legitimate faith groups.

²¹ Ibid., 1-2.

²² Ibid., 10.

²³ U.S Department of the Army, *Religious Support*, Field Manual 1-05 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 5 October 2012), iii.

²⁴ Ibid., 1-2. Chaplains can only perform worship services, rites, and sacraments according to their own faith traditions. Chaplains provide support and coordination that facilitates proper worship services, rites, and sacraments for all other demanded faith traditions. Perform and Provide is the common expression for these chaplain responsibilities.

²⁵ Ibid., iv.

²⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Health Promotion*, Army Regulation 600-63 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 7 May 2007), 4.

²⁷ Ibid., 25.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 25.

³¹ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2013*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 2013) p. 8.

³² Ibid.,16.

³³ Ibid.,8.

³⁴ Ibid.,13.

³⁵ SRP Interview questions. During the period of December 2012 thru January 2013, 12 commanders responded to the following SRP Interview Questions:

Interview of Commanders in the rank of LTC or COL:

1. On a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (fully satisfied), how satisfied were you with your Battalion/Brigade/Staff Chaplain as he/she gave religious support to your Soldiers and Families while you served in command?
2. Do you attribute your level of satisfaction with your Battalion/Brigade/Staff Chaplain's performance chiefly to his/her: (a) character attributes, (b) technical expertise, or (c) some other factor (please list:_____)?

3. If your Battalion/Brigade/Staff Chaplain successfully supported your unit's religious support requirements, what traits and character attributes of the chaplain do you believe contributed to that success?
4. If your Battalion/Brigade/Staff Chaplain did not successfully support your unit's religious support requirements, what traits and character attributes of the chaplain do you believe contributed to that failure?
5. What were the three most important religious support needs in your unit, and in what practical ways did your Chaplain meet or fail to meet those needs?
6. There are many components to professional identity. What are the three most important components for the professional identity of a successful US Army Chaplain?
7. Assuming that sustaining the soul and spirit of Soldiers and Families is a critical enabler for mission accomplishment, what is the single greatest attribute a chaplain needs to possess?
8. Based on your total Army experience, what are the most positive benefits that a Chaplain can bring to US Army Soldiers and Families?
9. Based on your total Army experience, what are the areas that Chaplains and the Chaplain Corps needs to improve in?

³⁶ Interview with confidential source, December 15, 2012. This confidential source is one, Respondent D, of the 12 commanders interviewed using the SRP questions referred to in endnote 35.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Interview with confidential source, January 10, 2013. This confidential source includes responses from all 12 commanders, Respondents A-L, interviewed using the SRP questions in Enclosure A.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Interview with confidential source, January 5, 2013. This confidential source is one of the 12 commanders, Respondent E, interviewed using the SPR questions referred to in Endnote 35.

⁴² James Finley, *Merton's Palace of Nowhere, a Search for God through Awareness of the True Self* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1978), 17.

⁴³ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁷ Blake E. Ashforth, Spencer H. Harrison, and Kevin G. Corley, "Identification in Organizations: An Examination of Four Fundamental Questions," *Journal of Management* no. 34 (June 2008): 326.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 329.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 332.

⁵⁰ L. Gregory Jones "Formed for Ministry: A Program in Spiritual Formation," *The Christian Century*, Feb 2-Feb 9, 2000, 1, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/217221428?accountid=4444> (accessed January 16, 2013).

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⁵³ Ibid.